

GRANT PROJECT ABSTRACT

Project Title: *State Implementation Grants for Enhancing the System of Services for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs through Systems Integration*

Organization Name: **Vermont Department of Health**
Maternal and Child Health Division

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Vermont is a small rural state with a population of slightly more than 600,000, with proportionally small state government agencies. Committed staff across children and family-serving state agencies work closely with each other and family organizations to address the needs of Vermont children and families. Vermont has many strengths and is at the leading edge of significant innovation and advancement in health care delivery and financing for Vermont's children, including those with special health care needs. Vermont's system of care for children and youth with special health care needs, however, is challenged by two major obstacles: 1) a patchwork of services that are organized under different state departments/agencies, with distinct funding streams and separate federal and state mandates; and 2) the need for increased focus on children (including children with special health care needs) in health reform initiative.

The SIG grant funds are allowing Vermont to make a significant statewide impact on improving services for children with special health needs and their families in alignment with state and national maternal and child health priorities. The new and expanded initiatives such as the Pediatric Care Coordination Learning Collaborative, Help Me Grow, and Integrating Family Services offer real opportunities for growth and integration. Vermont's small size and the richness of our resources, provide the ideal platform to realize an integrated system of services for children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN).

Over the next three years Vermont will develop and implement the first-ever State Plan aimed at integrating services for CYSCHN, to guide and sustain collaborative work into the future. Vermont is developing statewide strategies, such as the expansion of a Care Coordination Learning Collaborative to support medical home implementation with a focus on services for CYSCHN in pediatric and family practices, the promotion of family-professional partnerships, and the development of a shared resource (Help Me Grow) that provides comprehensive physician and community outreach and centralized information and referral centers, families are linked with needed programs and services. Ongoing data collection and analysis helps identify gaps in and barriers to the system, all expressly aimed at achieving a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated state and community system of services and supports for CYSHCN.

A comprehensive process and outcome evaluation will be completed to assess achievement towards stated objectives. Results will be shared broadly with key stakeholders, families, and policy makers.